



City of Bexley – Assessing Community Sustainability

Objectives via Community Engagement

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End Date: December 15, 2022

The Ohio State University

College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

School of Environment and Natural Resources

Agricultural, Environmental, and Developmental Economics (AEDE) 4567: Environment,

Economy, Development, and Sustainability (EEDS) Capstone Course

Solicitation #EEDS016



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Executive Summary

The goal of this project was to assist the City of Bexley in completing a Climate Action Plan (CAP). The objectives for this project included completing a CAP comparative study, conducting a community survey tailored to residents, and hosting a community engagement event. This project's mission was to better understand the wants and needs of Bexley residents in terms of a CAP by engaging with the community to formulate desired actionable steps toward reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. GHG emissions, particularly those created from anthropocentric activities, are the leading cause of climate change. Therefore, reducing GHG emissions by incentivizing, or at times requiring, behavioral and technological changes through

governmental policy is critical in mitigating the effects of climate change. A comprehensive CAP will reduce GHG emissions for current Bexley residents and future generations.

Completing a CAP comparative study was critical in scoping the CAP creation process, understanding best practices for various community engagement processes, and identifying sustainability initiatives that could apply to Bexley. However, it is essential to note that each municipality is unique. As such, all sustainability initiatives will need to be explicitly tailored to Bexley, considering factors such as population, pre-existing infrastructure, geographical location, political majorities, and residential preferences. This initial objective heavily informed the following objectives: conducting a community survey and hosting a community engagement event. The data from the last two objectives represent resident goals and desires relating to the natural and built environments. Examples of popular interests include transitioning to solar energy, improving/expanding infrastructure for alternative forms of transportation such as bussing and biking, and enhancing parks/greenspaces. Based on the results from this project, the final recommendations are as follows: continue the adoption/implementation of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) Complete Streets framework, obtain Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) certification, enhance renewable energy incentives and education, and establish a greenspace task force. We also recommend that the City of Bexley continue the CAP creation process with The Ohio State University capstone students.

Introduction

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns, which adversely impact human and environmental health (United Nations, 2022). These adverse effects are cumulative, and we, as a global population, are in a crisis that we created. Awareness and

education about climate change have become increasingly popular because we, unfortunately, are seeing increasing impacts in the form of natural disasters, human health impacts, global supply chain crises, and more. As a result, sustainability is becoming an increasingly important goal for the City of Bexley. Bexley is an urban community in Central Ohio with 13,928 residents (United States Census Bureau, 2022). One method of increasing sustainability throughout a community is by creating and adopting a Climate Action Plan (CAP). CAPs are government-led initiatives that describe actionable steps to decrease Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, thus improving the quality of the natural environment and the lives of residents. A good CAP is a comprehensive plan tailored to community members' needs, preferences, and desires. The City of Columbus adopted a CAP in 2021, showing that CAP adoption aligns with regional and national trends. Bexley would be the first Columbus suburb to adopt a CAP. Once successfully implemented, Bexley's CAP can act as a blueprint for other Columbus suburbs.

Figure 1 describes the general CAP Creation Process. A CAP first involves initial research, typically done by benchmarking, resident and commercial data collection, emissions tracking, and using demographic information. This information typically is public data that city governments track themselves prior to the creation of the CAP. Next, community surveys and workshops are vital in gathering relevant feedback from community members, aiding in creating a comprehensive CAP that meets the community's long-term vision. On average, the CAP creation and adoption process takes 2 – 3 years. This process was derived from trends present in the CAP comparative study.

Figure 1. CAP Creation Process



The City of Bexley began the CAP creation process by completing a GHG emissions inventory before our project began. This GHG inventory is necessary to understand the proportion of emissions admitted from residential, commercial, and industrial sectors and how these emissions compare to local municipalities, states, and the country. Therefore, this project’s objectives were to continue the process by completing a CAP comparative study, conducting a community survey, and hosting a community engagement event. The goals of these activities were to determine potential CAP initiatives and to engage with the community to understand their perceptions of such initiatives.

First, our CAP comparative study used data from the Zero Energy Project and the United States Census Bureau to highlight current policies that could feasibly apply to Bexley. Secondly, we distributed a community survey of 17 questions regarding community member comments, questions, and concerns about a CAP and received 92 responses. Lastly, we hosted a community

engagement event at the Bexley Public Library in the Quiet Reading Room. This event involved a brief presentation, collaborative group activity, and collective debrief with direct feedback from Bexley residents. The data collected from the three objectives outlined in this project will inform the City of Bexley which sustainability initiatives they should or should not include within a CAP based on the likelihood of adoption by residents. A CAP will become a unique long-term plan for the City of Bexley with actionable and realistic goals for improving human and environmental health for future generations.

Research Activities

CAP Comparative Study

The comparative study utilized Zero Energy Project data to identify cities across the United States currently working towards, committed to, or implementing CAPs. The Zero Energy Project is an organization that tracks and compiles all U.S. jurisdictions with CAPs and serves as the primary database in our comparative study. We used data from the United States Census Bureau to identify the 20 cities with existing CAPs that are most like Bexley. Cities were selected based on metrics including population size, population density per square mile, median household income, education attainment levels, and poverty rate (See Appendix A). After utilizing Excel to filter the plans based on the criteria, we analyzed the creation methods of each CAP and gleaned specific policies that had been successful. This step was critical in identifying CAP best practices, such as multiple rounds of community engagement and hosting in-person community engagement events with an online opportunity to provide feedback for those who cannot attend. It is important to note that the City of Bexley does not necessarily need to “reinvent the wheel” and should look for policies that have worked in similar jurisdictions.

Additionally, if multiple governments implement similar policies, they will gather momentum and become the status quo, yielding more significant GHG emission reduction results than many municipalities working independently.

CAPs usually have a few components in common besides the overall goal of reducing GHG emissions. These include encouraging renewable energy sources, improving environmental quality, and promoting equity. However, the details of specific actions can vary significantly from location to location due to geographic, political, economic, or cultural factors. For example, an area threatened by hurricanes will have a vastly different CAP compared to a far-inland city with little to no hurricane threat. In addition, income, education, and other factors can also affect sustainable development methods, speed, and success. Therefore, for the sake of time and concise data, the hundreds of CAPs were filtered. Among these 20 CAPs, we identified several common themes: energy aggregation and efficiency, expansion of greenspaces and biodiversity, improved infrastructure, and stimulation of the economy.

Community Survey

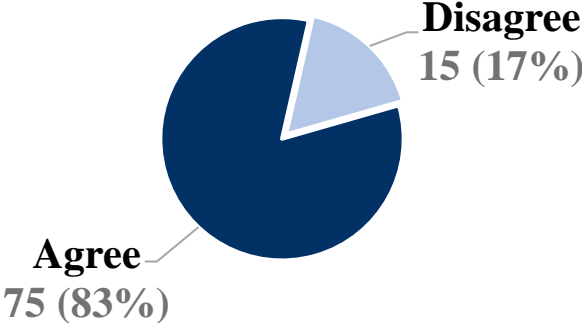
After gathering foundational knowledge about CAPs and Bexley demographics, we developed a survey to ask community members what kind of community development goals and sustainability initiatives they would like to see in their city. The survey was available on October 28th, 2022 and closed on November 18th, 2022. Over the three weeks, the survey received 92 responses. The 17 questions included multiple-choice, select-all-that-apply, and open-response questions that emphasized economic, social, and environmental issues. The survey used quantitative questions to gauge transportation usage, energy consumption, and willingness to pay for sustainable services. Qualitative questions also identified important aspects of resident life.

Figure 2. Survey Question #16: What do you like most about living in Bexley?



Figure 2 displays the favorite aspects of Bexley listed by residents. Many respondents vocalized their appreciation for their community’s abundance of community, trees, activities, schools, and infrastructure. Most responders were enthusiastic about advancing sustainability in Bexley through adaptation, innovation, and cooperation. Figure 3 illustrates that 83% of respondents believe that climate change should be a priority for the City of Bexley. See Appendix B for a complete list of our survey results.

Figure 3. Survey Question #1: It is important for the City of Bexley to mitigate, adapt to, and prepare for climate change.



Community Engagement Event

The last step in assessing community sustainability goals via community engagement was holding a community engagement event titled: Climate Action Plan Community Conversation. Our team hosted this event on November 9th, 2022, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Bexley Public Library in the Quiet Reading Room. It involved a brief presentation, facilitating a group activity, and gathering feedback from Bexley residents. First, our team members gave a 15-minute presentation describing the goals of the capstone project and our objectives as a team. After the presentation, we asked attendees to respond to 9 questions broken into four stations: greenspaces, energy, general sustainability topics, and additional thoughts. Attendees had notecards to respond to each question and then placed them on posters throughout the space. After 30 minutes, we regrouped to discuss the questions and ask follow-up questions. After the event, we analyzed the complete written responses (See Appendix C) and verbal feedback to create our aggregated event results in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Community Conversation Aggregate Feedback

Community Conversation Aggregate Feedback	
Station #1: Greenspace Questions	
Are greenspaces important to you? Why or why not?	Yes. They highlight nature, improve physical and mental health, and add beauty.
How can Bexley improve the natural environment and green spaces?	Add more native plants and trees. Stop pesticide use that is harmful to pollinator and human health.
Where could these improvements occur?	Vacant lots, rooftops, private lawns, roadway medians, schoolyards, and parking lots.
Station #2: Renewable Energy Questions	
What would encourage you to use renewable energy?	Low costs and consistent availability.
Do you think renewable energy in Bexley is feasible?	Yes. Especially solar and wind.
Do you think renewable energy is a smart investment?	Yes. Especially with tax incentives and subsidies.

Station #3: General Sustainability Questions	
How can Bexley encourage you to be more sustainable?	Dedicate bike lanes, restrict car use, and promote sustainable practices on social media.
How could Bexley save money while decreasing emissions?	Install solar panels, encourage walking and biking to school, and implement bike lane improvements when roads need repaired.
How do one resident's actions affect the community?	Residents influence one another.
Station #4: Additional Thoughts	
Additional thoughts?	Personal, community, and systemic change are all necessary to significantly reduce GHG emissions.

Recommendations

Based on the combined feedback obtained by our survey and engagement event, we formulated several recommendations for potential components in Bexley’s CAP that align with community values and interest.

Recommendation #1: Adopt MORPC Complete Streets Policy

The first recommendation is to adopt the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Complete Street Policy, a framework that creates more equitable transportation infrastructure. This policy considers “the needs of all people, including, but not limited to, people: walking, bicycling, using shared mobility devices and assistive devices, using transit and riding school buses, driving, and operating commercial and emergency vehicles” (Complete Streets, 2022). Since the residential sector generates most of Bexley’s GHG emissions and the transportation industry generates significant GHG emissions, it is logical to incentivize the reduction in miles driven using personal cars. MORPC’s Complete Streets Policy adoption makes sense in this context because it offers a framework that can be utilized to further incentivize long-term

behavioral changes such as walking, biking, and using public transportation as opposed to personal vehicles to work, school, stores, etc.

Public transportation is underutilized because buses do not arrive frequently and do not go to desired destinations, resulting in longer travel times per the survey data collected. Further, the lack of perceived pedestrian safety attributes to underutilized walking and biking modes of transportation. The Complete Streets Policy addresses such issues through the lenses of design choices, and infrastructure updates - such modifications to the transportation system enable safety and sustainability. It is important to note that Bexley has implemented some components of this policy but has yet to adopt it in its entirety formally. However, several Columbus suburbs have formally adopted this policy, including Hilliard, Gahanna, Upper Arlington, Worthington, and Westerville, demonstrating the relevance of addressing local infrastructure design. This policy's adoption ensures that the City of Bexley remains competitive and aligns with the Central Ohio Region's broader development and sustainability goals.

Recommendation #2: Obtain BFC Certification

Another recommendation is for the City of Bexley to obtain the Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) certification from The League of American Bicyclists. As mentioned in the previous recommendation, improved infrastructure for various modes of transportation is needed to reduce GHG emissions effectively. Specifically, ensuring that bicycling is safe and convenient is key to improving public health, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and improving the overall quality of life - all which Bexley residents expressed a desire for (Bicycle Friendly Communities, 2016). Obtaining this certification informs locals and visitors alike of Bexley's bikeability. It increases the normalization of bicycling as a viable means of transportation instead of only a recreational activity. BFC certification can offer practical, cost-

effective solutions to many challenges Bexley faces and increase the city's overall sustainability. This certification is a step towards incentivizing behavioral change resulting in decreased GHG emissions and increased public safety and health. Similarly, as with Recommendation #1, becoming BFC certified will ensure the City of Bexley continues to be a leader in development and sustainability initiatives within the Central Ohio Region, joining certified suburbs such as Westerville and Dublin as well as institutions such as The Ohio State University. Further, this recommendation complements Bexley's interest and progress toward becoming a popular cycling destination.

Recommendation #3: Enhance Renewable Energy Incentives and Education

In July 2022, Mayor Ben Kessler announced that the City of Bexley joined the City of Columbus and Solar United Neighbors of Ohio in the Columbus Area 2022 Solar and EV Charger Co-op. Emmanuel Remy, Chairperson of Columbus City Council's Environmental Committee, said this of the co-op agreement: "As we saw with the recent heatwave and power outages in June, combating climate change and having access to clean, reliable, local energy sources is critical and provides community and energy grid resilience" (Bournea, 2022). Renewable energy options provide the potential for a decentralized grid that gives more power to the individual and the community. Many survey responders and event attendees expressed the desire for a City of Bexley solar co-op because they did not know about the existing program. Increased advertisement through social media platforms and outreach at non-sustainability events would expand the number of residents participating in the co-op.

Additionally, City Code only allows rear-facing solar panels after city approval (City of Bexley, 2022). Multiple residents stated that this approval process for their solar panels was

lengthy and time intensive. To encourage the adoption of renewable energy options, City Code could be modified to expedite the approval process and make solar panel placement more customizable for homeowners. This change enables residents with only room for solar panels on the front of their homes to utilize solar energy.

Recommendation #4: Establish Greenspace Task Force

Question #3 of the survey (see Appendix B) asked community members to select top sustainability priorities. Responders identified improving air quality, the economy, and greenspaces as top choices. Bexley has numerous community-based organizations (e.g., Love Your Alley, Friends of Alum Creek Tributaries, and Bexley Community Gardens) already actively restoring the environment. These organizations, alongside City of Bexley sustainability and planning professionals, can accelerate greenspace improvement by establishing a joint task force to plan for the best use of natural ecosystems within Bexley. Task force meetings can be a time for resource sharing, constructive project critique, event advertisement, and networking. This group can also identify partnerships between organizations to strengthen new and existing projects., as well as external partnerships. For example, if a greenspace project borders another community outside the city boundaries, the neighboring community can be identified and contacted to share input on the project.

Analysis Limitations

Several analysis limitations arose during the creation and completion of this project. The primary limitation of this project was the overall time constraint, as there were just three months to conduct research, collect data, and perform data analysis for the community engagement components required in the CAP creation process. This overarching process typically takes 2-3

years to complete, and the community engagement processes takes a substantial percentage of that total. Due to the time constraint faced, our team could not distribute the residential survey to each resident door-to-door, create a business-focused and school-age children-focused survey, and utilize an additional engagement platform named “consider.it.” The best practice for municipality-led community engagement within a CAP creation process is to complete many rounds of engagement. These rounds of engagement will increase community-member input and provide more data. This input is significant because the data is the basis for selecting sustainability initiatives. The more involved the community is in the CAP creation process, the more likely the community members will support the plan and follow its recommendations.

Future Research


Two key groups were underrepresented throughout the community engagement process: school-aged children and business owners who operate within the city limits. Numerous engagement event participants expressed the importance of hearing from school-aged children because of the strong community emphasis on youth education and the role children have as future decision-makers. Business owners may also favor a CAP less than the general public due to the possibility of higher business operational costs. Therefore, we suggest a brainstorming activity for children and a business owner focus group to reach these stakeholders and gather CAP input.

Through engaging with these underrepresented groups, the finalized CAP will fit the needs of all community members of Bexley. These additional feedback opportunities present opportunities for future community engagement activities, including surveys and events, and the next steps in the CAP development process, including stakeholder meetings and document

drafting. We recommend that the City of Bexley continue working with capstone students from The Ohio State University for assistance with CAP creation.

Reflecting the multiple years it usually takes to complete a CAP, we propose a timeline of potential capstone projects for the next three semesters. Table 1 shows three objectives for each proposed capstone project that help narrow the project scope for students, while advancing the CAP creation process outlined in Figure 1.

Table 1. Proposed Future Capstone Projects

Proposed Future Capstone Projects			
Autumn 2022	Begin Community Engagement (1) CAP comparative study (2) Community Google Survey (3) Community workshop		Autumn 2023 Begin Draft CAP (1) Engagement data analysis (2) Draft CAP (3) Internal draft review
Spring 2023	Complete Community Engagement (1) School-aged children workshop (2) Business-owner workshop (3) Stakeholder meeting		Spring 2024 Complete Draft CAP (1) Consider.it public draft review (2) In-person public draft review (3) Create final CAP

The Spring 2023 capstone would complete the community engagement process by gathering input from underrepresented groups. The following academic year, capstone projects assist in writing the CAP document. The Spring 2024 capstone course includes in-person and online review opportunities for the public draft (Consider.it webpage). These types of public review mirror the City of Columbus CAP creation process.

Conclusion

The City of Bexley strives to reach the Cities Race to Zero Program goal of net zero emissions in the 2040s. A comprehensive CAP is an official document that displays the planning

and organization of how the community will achieve this goal. The City of Bexley has made noticeable strides to advance sustainability in recent years, and a finalized CAP would continue this momentum. Although Bexley's per capita emissions are already lower than the average for the State of Ohio, over time, the aggregate impact of cities like Bexley becoming carbon neutral will significantly reduce overall GHG emission levels.

Based on our research results, most Bexley residents support a CAP. The survey and community conversation feedback illustrate common themes desired by residents: increased safety of pedestrians and cyclists, opportunities for affordable renewable energy, and enhanced greenspaces. Successful initiatives in these focus areas could drastically reduce GHG emissions and ultimately become strong CAP components. Additional community engagement events hosted by future capstone students will highlight detailed recommendations in these areas.

The finalized CAP should represent the overall long-term vision of community members. A CAP that encompasses both this vision and is persuasive to influential decision-makers will be successful as a sustainable policy for traction and cooperation. By creating a CAP designed around the city government, businesses, and residents, the City of Bexley will have a comprehensive document to serve as a roadmap to reach GHG emission reduction goals while concurrently improving the health, safety, and life of Bexley's people and natural environment.

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Appendices

Appendix A: CAP Comparative Study Selection Criteria

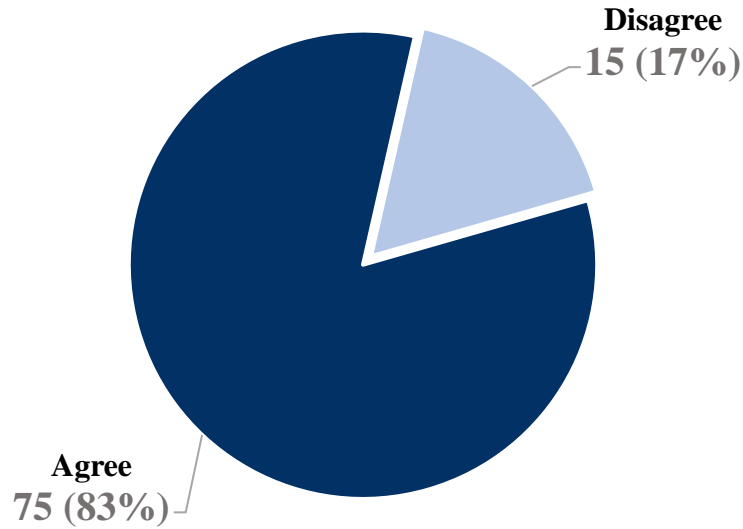
Selection criteria retrieved from the United States Census Bureau to identify the 20 cities with existing CAPs that are most like Bexley.

CAP Comparative Study						
City	State	Population (7k-28k)	Population Density/sq. mile	Median Household Income	Bachelor's Degree or Higher Age 25+	Poverty Rate
Bexley	OH	14,102	5,753.0	\$109,805.00	74.4%	6.0%
Albany	CA	19,908	11,324.6	\$103,132.00	72.8%	8.5%
Athens	OH	24,688	2,406.3	\$31,656.00	63.8%	48.6%
Belmont	CA	27,113	6,119.9	\$160,046.00	67.5%	5.8%
Brentwood	MO	7,998	4,320.7	\$80,486.00	72.1%	3.5%
Carrboro	NC	21,314	3,288.8	\$67,469.00	69.7%	14.1%
Concord	MA	17,669	754.3	\$160,392.00	72.6%	2.7%
Corte Madera	CA	10,812	3,234.8	\$153,101.00	73.1%	4.9%
Dobbs Ferry	NY	10,622	4,763.1	\$145,104.00	59.8%	2.8%
El Cerrito	CA	25,927	7,070.3	\$108,294.00	64.2%	8.0%
Emeryville	CA	12,104	10,137.5	\$104,063.00	72.0%	12.8%
Fairfax	VA	24,574	3,869.6	\$109,708.00	60.3%	9.8%
Hastings-on-Hudson	NY	7,849	4,340.6	\$139,939.00	72.1%	3.0%
Middleton	WI	19,784	2,442.9	\$73,336.00	61.3%	8.9%
Mission	KS	9,490	3,730.9	\$64,703.00	55.3%	9.5%
Monona	WI	8,045	2,646.2	\$76,719.00	54.2%	6.1%
Montpelier	VT	7,436	802.0	\$65,668.00	61.2%	4.0%
Oberlin	OH	8,312	1,758.1	\$49,840.00	51.6%	24.9%
Park City	UT	7,873	411.0	\$114,798.00	62.2%	8.0%
Summit	NJ	22,016	3,790.3	\$142,845.00	70.6%	5.1%
West Windsor	NJ	27,165	1,155.3	\$170,076.00	83.3%	4.1%

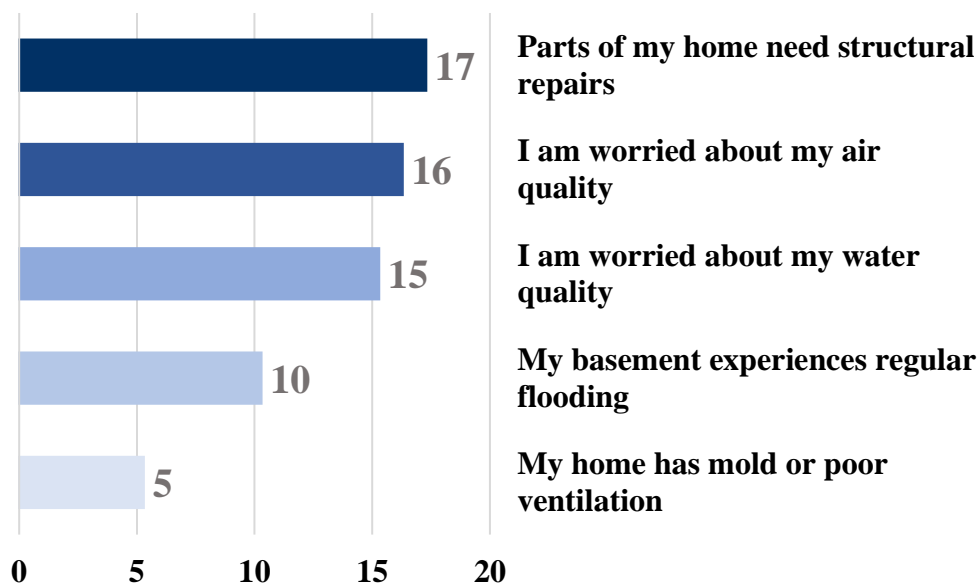
Appendix B: Community Survey Data

Our Resident Climate Action Plan Survey was open for three weeks. The x-axis of the bar graphs represents the number of responses, and the y-axis represents the selected choice. The first number in front of the pie charts represents the number of responses, followed in parentheses by the percentage total. The survey received 92 responses.

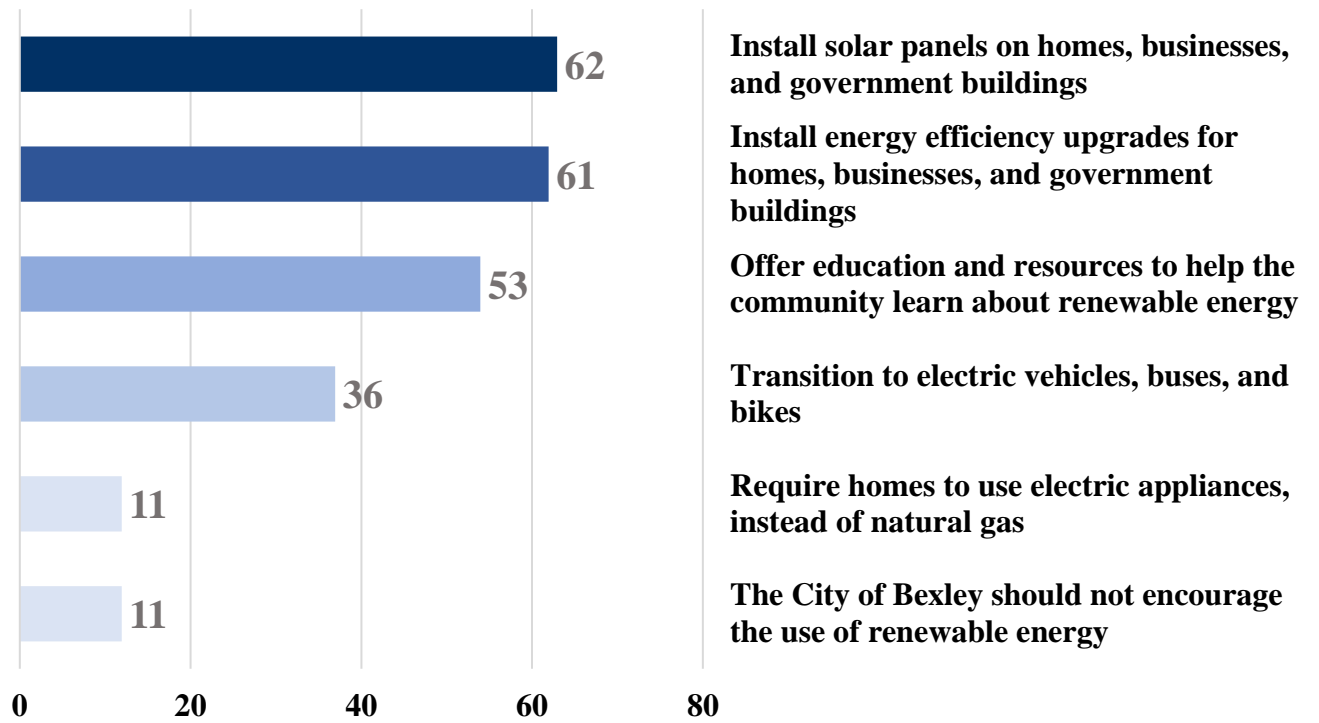
Question #1: It is important for the City of Bexley to mitigate, adapt to, and prepare for climate change.



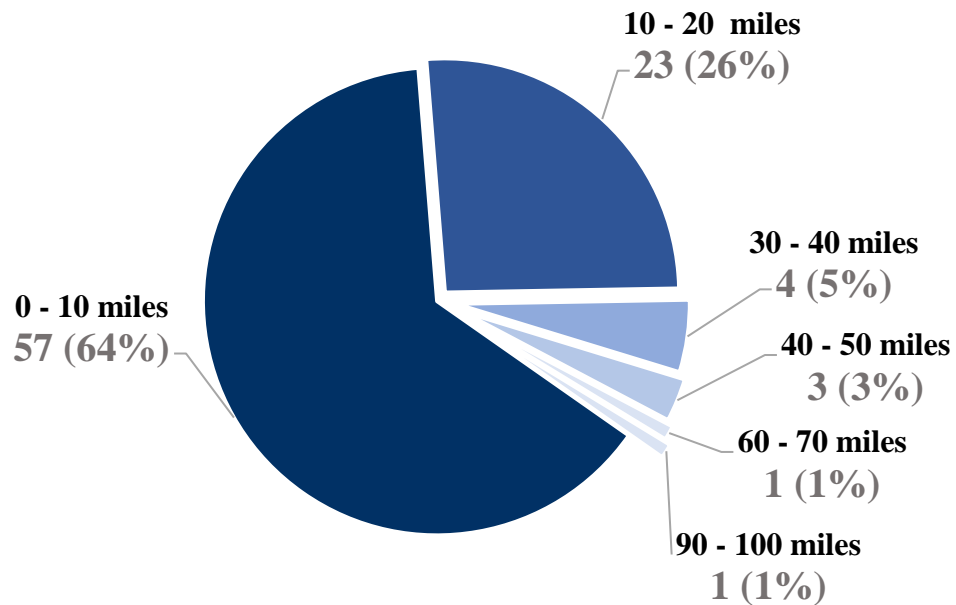
Question #2: Do you experience any of the below conditions in your current living situation? Please select all that apply.



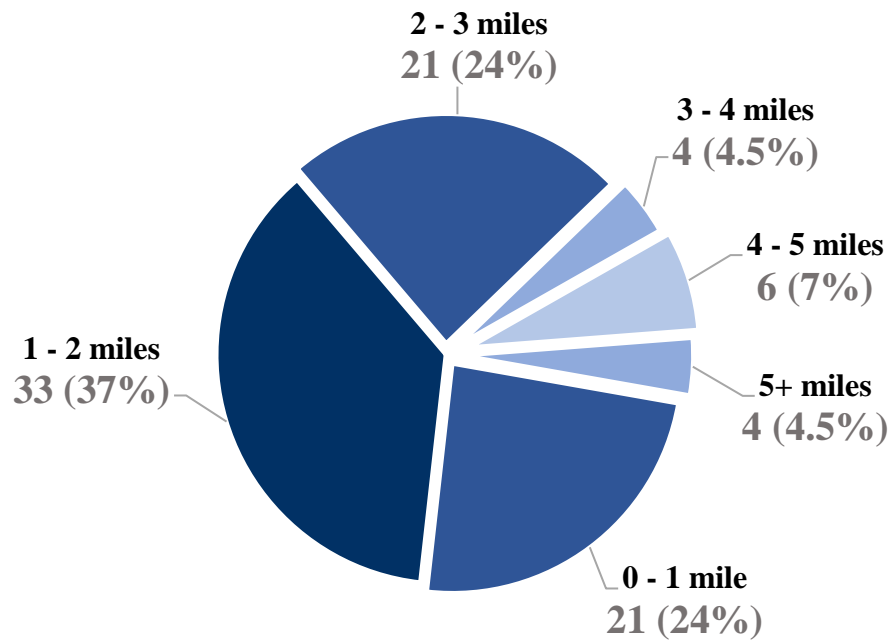
Question #3: Which of the following sustainability targets do you view as the most important?
Please select your top priorities.



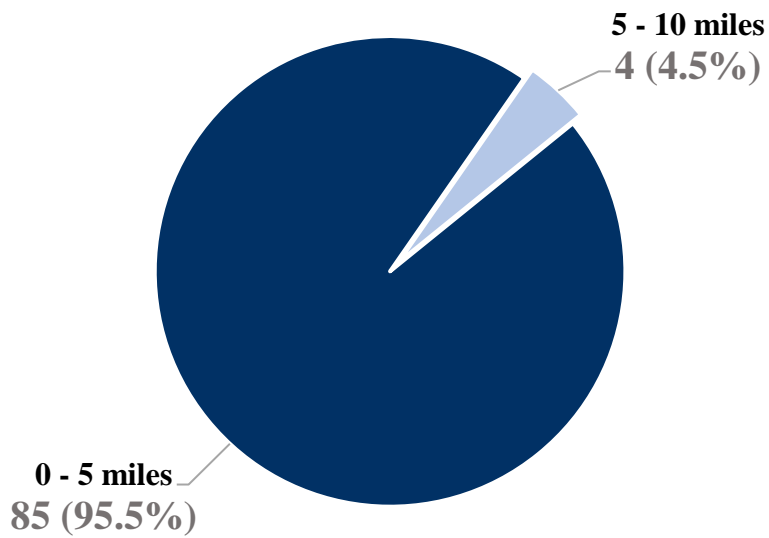
Question #4: How many miles a day do you drive a personal car?



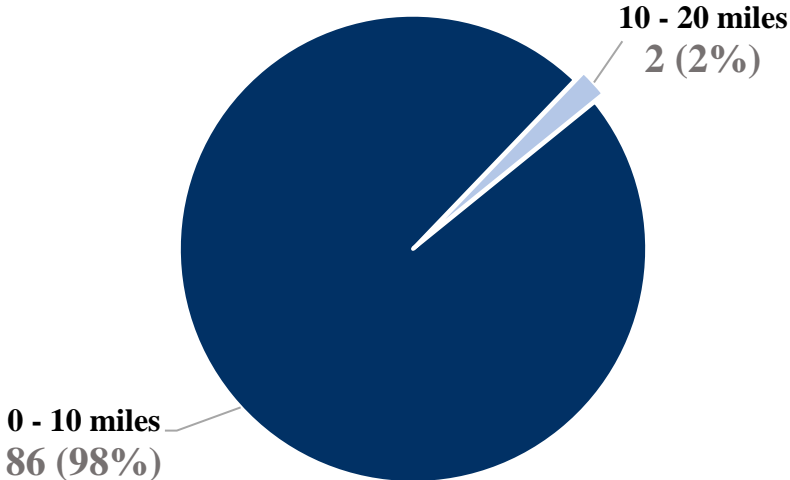
Question #5: How many miles a day do you walk?



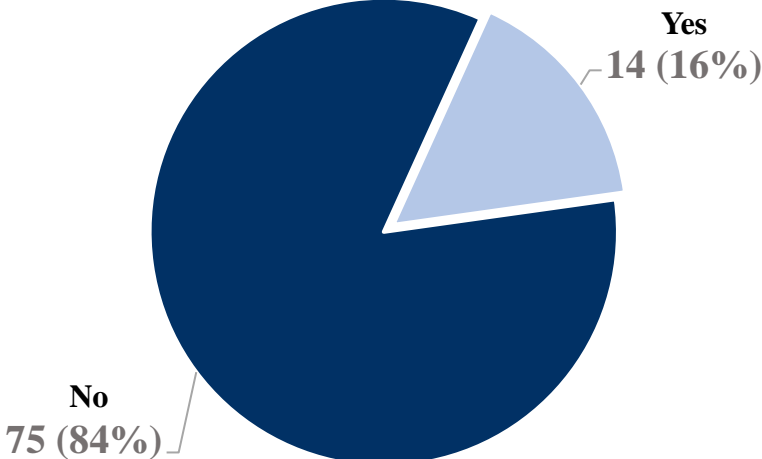
Question #6: How many miles a day do you bike?



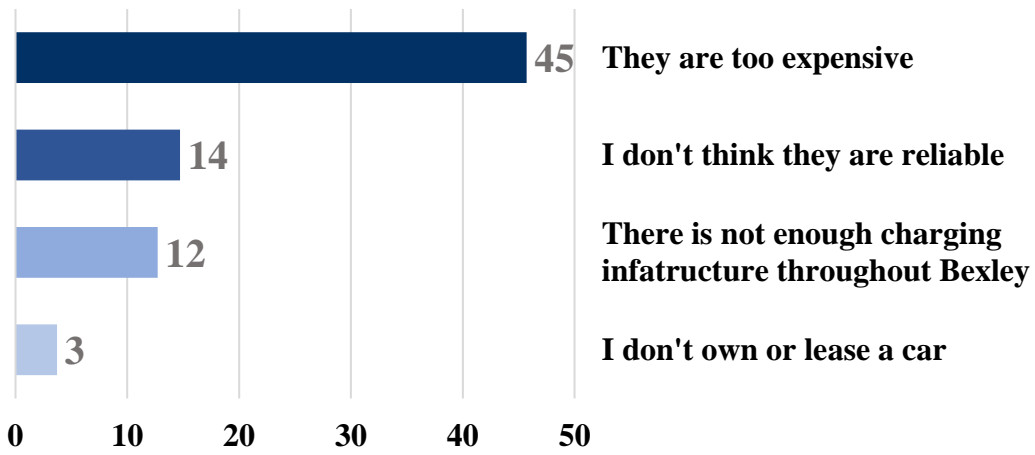
Question #7: How many miles a day do you take public transportation?



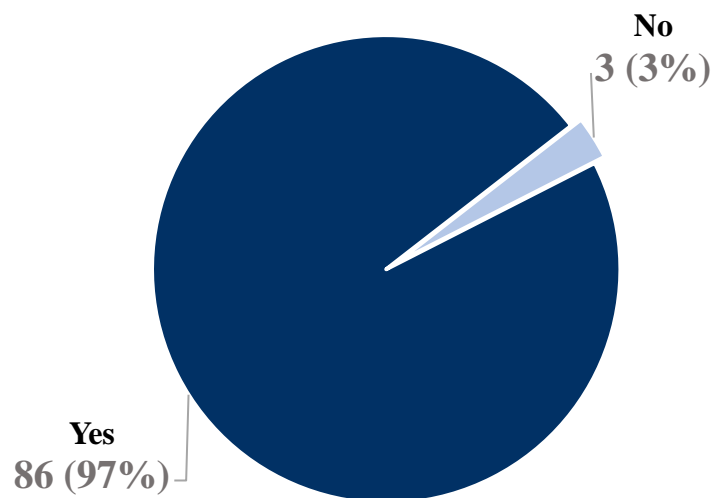
Question #8: Do you currently drive an electric vehicle?



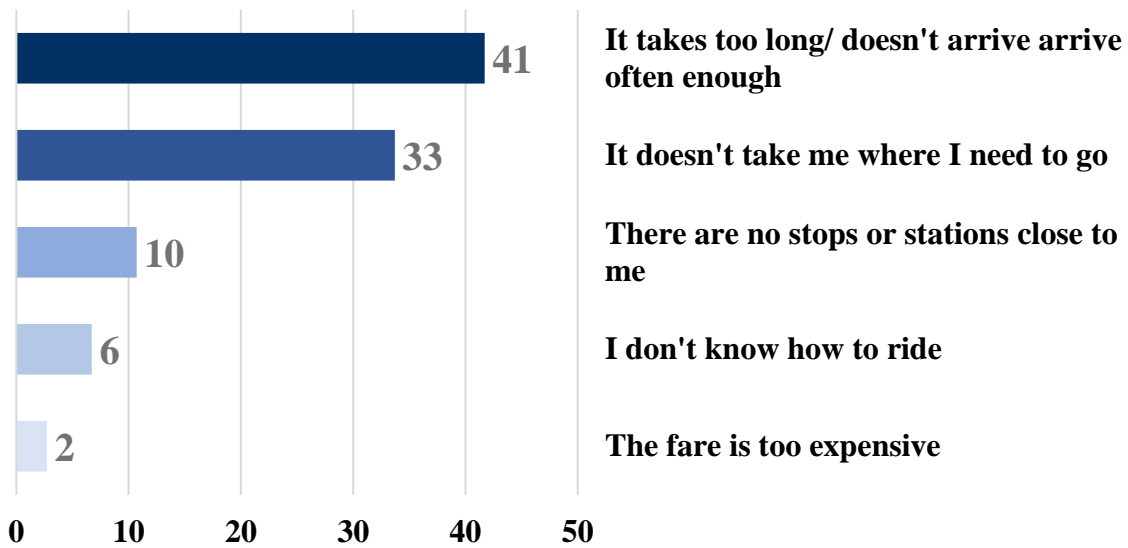
Question #9: If you do not own an electric vehicle, why not? Please select all that apply.



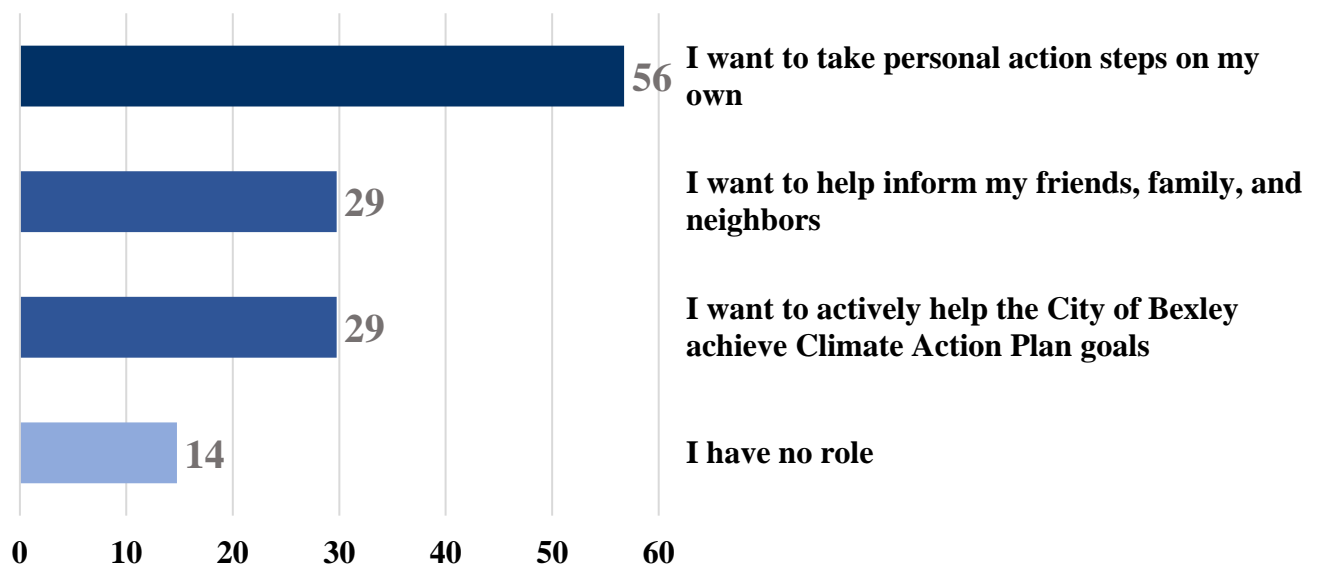
Question #10: Do you regularly take public transportation?



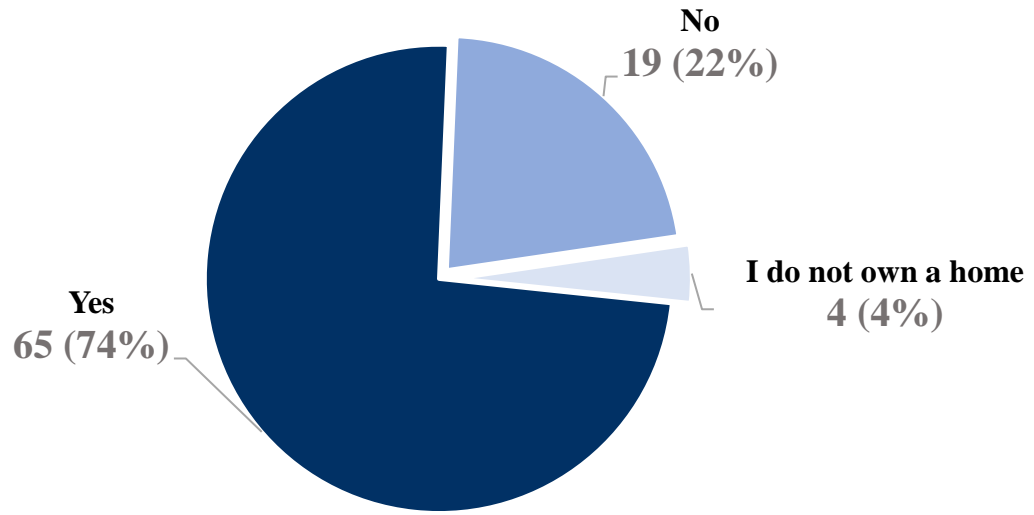
Question #11: If you do not take public transportation, why not? Please select all that apply.



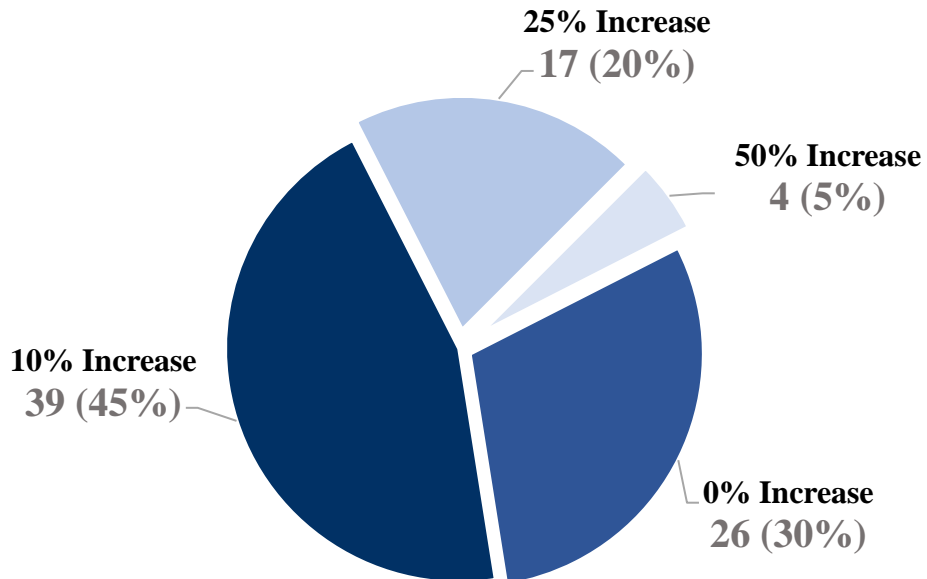
Question #12: Which of the following programs should the City of Bexley focus on to encourage the use of renewable energy? Please select all that apply.



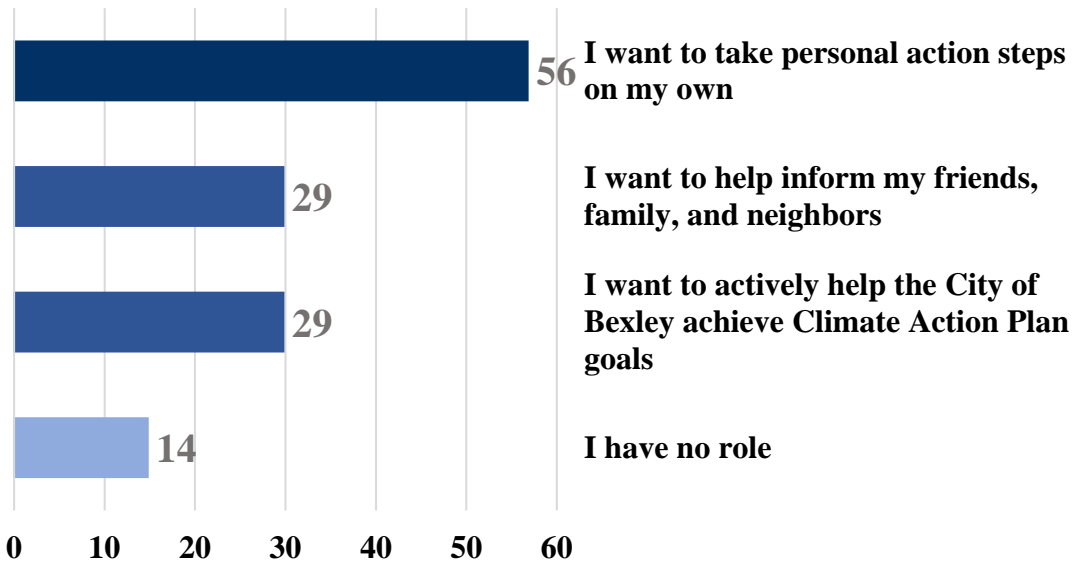
Question #13: Would you consider putting solar panels on your home if there was a discount or rebate offered?



Question #14: How much extra would you be willing to pay on your energy bill to power your entire home with zero-emission electricity?



Question #15: How do you see yourself involved in a Climate Action Plan? Please select all that apply.



Question #16: What do you like most about living in Bexley?

1. Trees.
2. Walkability! Sense of community.
3. The community is engaged in improvement that will help all and lots of tree-lined streets.
4. The sense of community and the progressive ideas to improve community living for all.
5. It is a small community that appreciates education.
6. It has been a very safe community with a strong commitment to educational excellence. We value both and are willing to pay a higher tax rate to live in this type of community. I hope Bexley continues to focus on having a safe community with high academic standards.
7. Pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.
8. I can walk where I need to go.
9. The trees and architecture.
10. Wolfe Park dog park and some of my neighbors.
11. Beautiful homes and public spaces.
12. The beauty of the city; close to downtown, airport, etc.; arboretum; long history here; friends and family; competent and caring city employees; great police force.
13. Neighbors, proximity to downtown and airport.
14. The people and the ability to walk to most of the things I need/do.
15. It is a beautiful, safe neighborhood with great police protection close to downtown.
16. Trees and beautiful landscaping.
17. I enjoy like-minded neighbors, good schools, and curbside composting.
18. Big old trees, excellent schools, historic homes, democratic values.
19. The small community feeling.
20. Neighbors and trees.
21. Sidewalks, close to everything, clean, most neighbors have the same behavioral values.
22. The trees.

23. Main Street businesses and community activities.
24. Beauty. Community. Safety.
25. Everything.
26. The beautiful clean streets with plantings of all kinds - chances to walk and bike in nature despite being close to downtown and the airport.
27. Walkable, good general amenities, good schools, good central location.
28. Proximity to downtown and the airport and the great school system.
29. Location, programs.
30. The fact that I do not need a car for my daily activities.
31. Schools.
32. Community.
33. People & community spirit.
34. Excellent services, good neighbors.
35. Places along Main Street are walkable, and the community is willing to work together to reduce their impact on the planet.
36. Walkability and community togetherness; excellent schools; many sustainability initiatives.
37. The trees.
38. Bexley City Schools and the increasing value of our homes due to the district, the many architectural styles of our houses, and the level of pride and improvements our residents have regarding their residences.
39. Proximity to community resources within bike range.
40. Location, people, architecture.
41. Schools.
42. the trees and the people; at times I do not feel welcome in the community.
43. Community in which we know our neighbors. Walkability. beautiful homes and trees.
44. The community.
45. Trees and people here.
46. The people who live here.
47. It is walkable.
48. That we are having this conversation. The green initiatives. The ability to take action in this city. That it is an arboretum.
49. Tree lined streets, accessibility to sidewalks, Main Street, downtown, variety of activities
50. Neighborhood peace and quiet.
51. The trees. The wonderful sense of community. The schools. Increasing diversity. Progressive leadership.
52. Sense of community.
53. Lots of beautiful, important trees.
54. Mature Tree Lined Streets, walking community and beautiful green spaces!
55. The racial and religious diversity along with being a walking/biking community are huge draws, but the effort to support our Arboretum makes Bexley the healthiest place to live. And it certainly adds to the beauty of our city and gives us a vibrantly healthy city in which to breathe and live.
56. Location.
57. Community engagement.
58. It is my lifelong home.

59. It is small and you can walk everywhere and are close to your friends.
60. I enjoy the tight-knit community and the ability to access most places by foot.
61. Safety and education.
62. Everything: community, roads and sidewalks, the old houses, schools, the citizenry, the city government, police department, and the value received for our tax money.
63. I live in Clintonville but work in Bexley. I love both communities because they care about social, environmental, and local & global issues.
64. Nature around us & the welcoming community.
65. Walkability.
66. Conscientious community with progressive viewpoints. Focus on equality.
67. Schools.
68. Sense of community and walkability.
69. I like how our community is very active and is always outside.

Question #17: Are there any other ideas or comments you would like to share regarding climate action and sustainability in Bexley?

1. No
2. I would love more help reducing one-time plastic use.
3. Would like Bexley to contract to provide green electricity (via REC or community solar/wind) for all unless a household opts out
4. Walking, jogging, and biking through its parks and streets; its community -mindedness
5. Community-wide involvement or incentives would be a spur for us to act in our home.
6. Resistance to working on climate change is also connected to resistance to work on gender and ethnic/racial diversity.
7. We participate in the food recycling program and appreciate being available. If Bexley moves toward providing incentives for solar panels, it makes sense to include incentives for electric storage units as well, so the solar power can be stored and used as a backup electric supply for the homeowners. Note: our next car will be electric. But I do have concerns that nationally our electrical infrastructure will not support broad adaptation of EVs (Electric Vehicle). That could be a major issue if we push EV adoption without the ability to effectively provide clean electricity to power the EVs. It makes little sense to put ourselves in a position where we need to drastically increase the use of coal to meet the energy needs of charging EVs.
8. There are always 2 sides to a story and both the pros and cons of each issue need to be fully researched and presented and considered before a binding policy is adopted. For example, what about the change in waste products when we move to more electric vehicles, compare the waste they make to that of gasoline cars. And where is the electricity made? What climate impacts does that have and what communities are impacted by that?
9. If you get rid of natural gas and oil it will not be sustainable and we would absolutely move
10. Encouraging smart choices is fine but do not make requirements on residents. We do not want energy cost increases or demands made on my property to make “upgrades.” We do not produce any more pollution than any neighboring communities and our large tree population makes a large compensation for what we do produce.
11. I want to know if the recyclables collected every week are being recycled.

12. Global warming is global. It is in the name. There is no benefit to Bexley residents paying more for energy to help the environment. We get poorer and it makes no difference to the environment. It is only wise if the world is doing the same thing at the same time.
13. More information that is well delivered and easy to understand.
14. I love our food waste recycling program. I would like to see a pet waste recycling program.
15. Thank you for working towards this!
16. It was a long process getting our solar panels approved through the city
17. Too many resources are being devoted to this topic and will not be a priority for me.
18. I am so glad that students are encouraged to walk or bike to school. Happy not to have to deal with school buses.
19. Bexley should press on green energy aggregation asap, while also publicizing the potential of the IRA as much as possible.
20. I hope the plan will consider promoting healthy homes, green/clean energy sources, exercise by providing safe and clean walking areas, and local foods are all connected and contribute to the health of our community. I also hope the plan considers ways to partner with surrounding communities so they can be improved as well (whether that is formal partnerships and initiatives with Columbus or expanding community education by having gathering places like churches circulate similar information we may generate for Bexley residents concerning ways to make your home more efficient).
21. Lanes on Main St are too wide for a 25-mph speed limit and discourages walking on the sidewalk and biking on the road as drivers usually travel much faster. Widened and protected walking/biking paths should be the norm everywhere, especially in a small community like Bexley
22. No
23. 1) Would like the city to take a lead role by converting the City and School fleets and buildings first, and then partner with the private schools and commercial businesses along main street. 2) Would like to see the City lobby to have vehicle CO2 emissions testing in Franklin County as is common in many states.
24. How could this be applicable to Capital University? They are a big part of the City of Bexley and should be considered in this discussion.
25. The most impactful thing we can do is make renewable electricity available to every city resident and ensure everyone can afford it.
26. The worldwide impact on many of these initiatives is minuscule and most residents are going to see a 25% increase in energy related costs in the next 12 months, along with fuel prices which have doubled under this current President. The appetite to invest in less efficient, and more expensive green solutions will take more time as we face unrepresented inflation to go along with terrible energy decisions from the Executive Branch. Nuclear power is the single most efficient and clean source of energy and should be expanded immediately. It will close the gap in the inefficiencies of Solar, Wind and Electric vehicles that will soon put a strain on a traditional power grid, especially in the summer. Case and point Los Angeles Summer 2022.
27. The City needs to offer options to our residents and businesses regarding environmental, sustainable, energy initiatives - the current and planned bans, or making people opt-out

versus opt-in will backfire in the long-run. Recycling without business partners and a market for the goods is wish recycling.

28. Everything is interconnected.
29. Feet on the street was a great idea, I hope it creates some changes in improved recycling behavior. appreciate at events the staff helping separate trash/compost/recycling.
30. Instead of doing things piecemeal, find one item that will make an impact
31. We need to recycle more plastic than is currently allowed.
32. I am concerned that like most of the country too many people in Bexley will choose comforts and conveniences over protecting our climate.
33. Your survey does not include enlarging tree canopy; planting native species; ridding the community of invasive species; planting vegetation to capture storm runoff; requiring more greenspace on lots versus hardscape.
34. Trees have a huge positive impact on the environment. Having used electric and gas appliances gas is the way to go for cooking....and furnaces too.
35. Need more information on electric vs natural gas. Reliability and costs. Also, solar panels.
36. Our community is an arboretum. Trees are a huge factor in mitigating climate change. More emphasis should be placed on educating our community of their importance- absorbing heavy rainfalls with their roots, providing shade which reduces energy costs, providing home for native insects and animals, and more. Tallamy says it best: "We are at a critical point of losing so many species from local ecosystems that their ability to produce the oxygen, clean water, flood control, pollination, pest control, carbon storage, etc., that is, the ecosystem services that sustain us, will become seriously compromised."
37. I appreciate Bexley being mindful of repurposing old trees to create the Bexley Fairy Village as it brings joy to young children and their families as they engage in their imagination.
38. See comments regarding tree planting.
39. Charging /gas station in Bexley
40. People here are very selfish
41. Not that I can think of
42. I would be interested in a solar cooperative that would function transparently under the supervision of the city government.
43. A city program for any businesses or government buildings (schools, library, city hall) to help them add solar panels and make renovations to help improve their carbon imprint. It is easier to convince citizens to make personal decisions to improve their homes when we can say that we are improving our city buildings.
44. I am not just interested in idea for climate action but in a real plan for implementation
45. Meatless Mondays and more vegan food truck festivals.

Appendix C: Community Engagement Event Data

Our team hosted a community engagement event titled Climate Action Plan Community Conversation on November 9th, 2022, from 7: 00p.m – 8:00 p.m. at the Bexley Public Library. After a brief presentation, we facilitated an activity where we hung ten poster questions throughout the room, and all 17 community members in attendance answered them on notecards. These notecards were then taped to the posters to stimulate ideation and conversation among attendees; the answers written during this activity are below.

Station #1: Greenspaces

Are greenspaces important to you? Why or why not?

1. Pet owners appreciate dog parks where they can run around
2. Coming from a rural area, Bexley's dedication to greenery makes me feel more at home
3. Yes, keeping the natural world "natural" and promoting/ maintaining biodiversity is necessary to limit the efforts of climate change
4. They are only important if they are not filled with poison
5. Yes- they are important for mental health and boosts creativity
6. Coming from a rural environment, nature is important to me. It is calming, adds **beauty** to the community & is good for air quality
7. To breath and for beauty
8. Yes, the help in climate control, emotional health, and physical health
9. Greenspaces are everything. They are the great equalizer - enjoyed, nurtured by all. Nourishing to all.

How can Bexley improve the natural environment and green spaces?

1. Fill up medians with natural plants, eliminate the need to mow. Provides food for pollinators
2. Get rid of the concrete and black tip driveways. Turn them into more open spaces
3. Promote the growth of native flora and fauna. Stop the use of manufactured pesticides and fertilizers. Reduce space used for grass lawns and replace them with native plants. Trees to promote traffic calming within the city
4. Bexley is going to have a Year of the Parks for 2023. Our parks will become places to gather and share ideas & enjoy beauty
5. Living roofs on businesses, schools, and homes
6. More trees along the streets and sidewalks
7. Fill school and churches and synagogues with native plants and shrink the lawn
8. Remove invasive honeysuckle
9. Consider every outdoor available space as greenspaces. (Love Your Alley example, retail areas, businesses, schools)
10. Improve use of native plants in greenspaces/ replace existing plants with less invasive options
11. Greenspace is important to us, as our yard is not large. More greenery better CO2 capture
12. Get rid of unnecessary noise
13. Due to Bexley's limited footprint greenspaces are an important feature to protect and invest in creating mini parks when vacant lots do come available
14. Create a better connection to Bexley's impact on Alum Creek by creating volunteer opportunities and education programs focused on the health of the creek

Where could these improvements occur?

1. Parks, alleys, medians, residential greenspaces, rooftops
2. Get rid of those leaf and snow blowers or at least of the loud ones
3. North Bexley (most affluent and large lawns in the city), trees planted throughout, native plants planted throughout
4. Add pocket parks & gardens on vacant lots
5. Tree lawns, front yards along sidewalks, schoolyards
6. Avoid pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides in lawn care
7. It would be great if green space in Bexley had more native plants and flowers. This could be an educational opportunity to encourage more residents to have natives in their yards
8. Parking for students. Charging stations for students who have EV's
9. Alleys, roofs, in home yards (instead of grass)
10. Pocket parks, alleys landscaping of residents and businesses, permeable surfaces in parking lots

Station #2: Renewable Energy

What would encourage you to use renewable energy?

1. The outrageous cost of gasoline! :)
2. Renewable energy is especially important. I have a limited income so have been hesitant to invest in solar panels or an EV (Electric Vehicle), but these can be more affordable than I think
3. It needs to be real and available
4. State/ nationwide incentives to subsidize renewable energy sources instead of fossil fuels and efficiency upgrade programs
5. Make solar panel permits easier to obtain
6. Efficiency flow & continuity of use
7. At Capital University it is all about funding. We must make decisions based on what we can afford
8. I do not need encouragement
9. A community solar program would be a great fit for Bexley
10. Having it save money & even improve value of home
11. An honest, competent, solar panel installer. A solar co-op would be helpful

Do you think renewable energy in Bexley is feasible?

1. Sure
2. Yes - especially solar and wind power
3. Yes - but Ohio govt is getting in the way
4. Yes. We have lots of garages and rooftops
5. Absolutely, Bexley's community is uniquely situated to support renewable energy in a very productive way
6. Yes, it is necessary. Hydro, wind, solar, and geothermal could easily be made ubiquitous within the city

Do you think renewable energy is a smart investment?

1. Yes

2. Yes, it is necessary for humanity's survival. Most levels of government in the US subsidize the fossil fuel industry and those investments could easily be subsidized to renewables.
3. Yes, I would like to see hybrid cars with solar panels on them
4. Yes, the planet is getting hotter
5. It is imperative
6. Renewable energy is a smart investment. It is feasible with Bexley city tax credits for improved use, such as substitute solar panels. Electric vehicles for city use

Station #3: General Sustainability Questions

How can Bexley encourage you to be more sustainable?

1. Build more infrastructure to encourage sustainable transportation
2. Residents are interactive personally as well as via Facebook sites and knowledge of other residents' practices do affect other's actions
3. New creative infrastructure, dedicated biking street, a central heating plant, encourage residents to increase their political influence on sustainable issues at the state-level
4. End zoning requirements for car parking for commercial buildings
5. Use the power and influence of social media/ pictures to promote whatever activity you are promoting
6. Allowing more natural green, promote (imitate) nature's way
7. Continue expansion of the recycling program
8. Offer reusable containers for take-out from local restaurants
9. Create dedicate bike lanes
10. Restrict car use within the city, make infrastructure more pedestrian oriented
11. Efficiency upgrade programs/ incentives
12. Perhaps offer incentives for walking/ cycling: no car day, closing certain blocks to cars on certain days
13. Publicize goals and celebrate journey. For example: we want 50% of residents actively composting. Celebrate at 20%

How could Bexley save money while decreasing emissions?

1. Encourage, promote, and support bus use
2. Schools have solar panels
3. Schools promote electric scooters and discourage car drop-off
4. Pedestrian- focused infrastructure, multi-use zoning and multi-family zoning made standard, move to renewable energy sources, efficiency upgrades made throughout the city
5. Create a goal of 80% middle + upper school students biking to school
6. A coordinated city-wide solar coop, reliably run, could help
7. Instead of grass medians, fill with nature plants. No need to mow!
8. Set up carpool groups, set up aggregate energy program
9. Have safe biking, riding bikes on broad + main streets are difficult
10. Using less machinery and more (wo)men power
11. Implement bike/ pedestrian improvements at same time as street/ road upgrades
12. Bexley is investing in city equipment that should reduce emissions

13. Encourage people to consider owning fewer vehicles through education. Product as a "service" is a real opportunity in this community

How do one resident's actions affect the community?

1. Encourage less use of plastic, & more recycling of 4's and 5's plastic
2. Whatever one person does affects everyone
3. Every action has an impact however small
4. I think if more people walked to stores/ restaurants or rode their bikes more, it would encourage more residents to do the same. I feel the same about food waste recycling
5. Popular residents who champion sustainable concepts influence their peers. Maybe identify community, ambassadors, across various age gaps
6. We are all living on the same planet. Everything winds up somewhere
7. Any individual action can start a movement/ trend. Especially if that action is consistent, & long-term
8. Bexley could encourage residents and businesses to be more sustainable by 1) education through the city website and 2) including ideas for sustainability in many civic programs/activities, etc.
9. Residents' actions are a small piece of the puzzle, systemic change is necessary. Local/ state/federal governments are needed to drive this change and encourage individual changes in action

Station #4: Additional Thoughts

Additional thoughts?

1. All electric city vehicles
2. The city should enter a long term PPA or vDTA agreement
3. The time for action was years ago, but all levels of govt need to start taking concrete steps. Pedestrian-focused infrastructure. City move to or buy power from only renewable sources. The cost does not matter if the effects are happening now, and money is not real. Bexley is an affluent community that can afford to set the example of a "green" city.
4. I think a hurdle for people in solving our current climate crisis will be allowing ourselves to be "gray thinking". We are much more comfortable with black and white thinking. Many people don't think there is a problem or think there is no way to fix it.